



# Turtle Tracks

Official Newsletter of the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association



Volume 17, Issue 3

## President's Message

Hello to Trail users:

Hope this finds you in great spirits for the early-fall season, we were really dry for a while and the grass all turned brown in June, then in August we got the rain, and I have had to cut my grass three times since then to keep it down to a manageable level. Football season is here and the grand kids are all back in school so Fall is off to a good start.

A big **THANK YOU** to our new **LIFE MEMBERS**, **Mike Parke** of Dickinson, and the **Denton and Paulette Berntson** family of Nome, ND. The donations will be put to good use on the MDH trail system.

First I want to thank the Forest Service for getting our volunteer agreement in place, so we are legal to work on the MDH system and have coverage for any accidents that may occur, thank goodness we have had no accidents over the years due to the safe way our trail members go about their business. Also the Forest Service reprinted the LMNG map, 2013 edition, so we have that horizontal coverage of the whole 144 miles of the MDH trail. They are still working on the update of the MDH trail map. We are down to single digits of this map. The fires out west are making this update difficult to finish. We had a large turnout of about 40 people for our annual trail day event and surfaced some 1,200 feet of trail just south of old Highway 10 on the Buffalo Gap trail. This trail goes around to the west of the TRNP wilderness area. We want to especially thank the **Home on the Range** and **Save the MDH** for

their help on this project. Also Thanks to **Don Mayer** who was instrumental in helping complete this project with the use of his equipment.

Other activities this summer included cleaning out all the water cache boxes, thanks to **Bruce Bishop** and his helpers in getting this task done. And we cannot forget all the great races that were held by MDH100 and **Nick Ybarra's** group of volunteers. More to come on those events in the next issue.

Thanks to the **Diane Stoltz Family** and a **REC Roundup** grant, we have purchased some benches to go up along the MDH trail and at the trailheads. Some work on installing the puncheons just south of Burning Coal Vein Campground and installing location marker posts where the trails cross major roads are also in the works for October.

We have made the transition of the treasurer position to **Rod Mitzel**, who is doing a bang-up job, and **Roger Ashley** is still doing a great job on the website and membership. We have over 140 orders at present and the new medallions and patches seem to be a hit. So get on the website and see what it has to offer and look at the merchandise available from the MDHTA.

Hope this finds you in a great mood to enjoy the fall season. There is nothing better to clear your mind than to get out on the trail whether it is hiking, biking, or horseback riding.

Happy Trails,

Curtis W. Glasoe – President - MDHTA

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## Special points of interest:

- *The Little Missouri River is North Dakota's only State Scenic River*
- *National Trails Day is coordinated nationally by the American Hiking Society*

# National Trails Day Follow-up

by Roger Ashley

MDHTA has participated in National Trails Day since 1999 with its local Maah Daah Hey Trail maintenance projects the first Saturday in June. Each year the Association submits its report to the American Hiking Society to help lend support for programs that enhance support for trails. This year the Association's group photo taken by Pat Ashley made the back cover of the American Hiking Society's National Trails Day 2017 Report. This report can be seen on the web at <http://nationaltrailsday.americanhiking.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/2017-NTD-Report-508-v03.pdf>. The Maah Daah Hey Trail event was one of nine events held in North Dakota and one of 1,492 events held nation-wide in all 50 States.

For a recap on this year's project, the MDHT Trails Day event took place on the Buffalo Gap Trail west of Medora south of Old US 10. Forty-two volunteers from the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association along with other organizations,

such as US Forest Service, Save the MDH, and Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch joined forces to surface 1,200 feet of trail. This involved stripping a three foot wide swath of sod and then laying down gravel to provide drainage and a serviceable surface to use after a rain. The new surface will also reduce erosion and improve the ability of the trail to handle the increased traffic from bikers, horseback riders, and hikers. Don Mayer, former MDHTA President said, "Surfacing a 1,200 feet in a day is a good day's work. Today you did it in half the time." Next year's National Trails Day is scheduled for June 2, 2018.



# Membership Recognition—Thank You!

## **Life Members:**

Roger & Pat Ashley  
Glenn & Jolene Baranko  
Tom & Sherri Dickson  
Ken Eberts  
Curt & Carol Glasoe  
Jesse Hanson & Lisa Kudelka  
Dale & Jennifer Heglund  
Christa Kron in memory of Denton & Paulette Berntson  
Mark Liebig  
Ron & Aileen Luethe  
Don & Susan Mayer  
Medora Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Rodney & Carolyn Mitzel  
John R. Olson  
Mike Parke  
Charles & Sandra Peterson  
Brian Selland  
Diane Stolz Family  
Dwight & Loa Tober  
Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation  
Glennys Ulschak  
Nick & Lindsey Ybarra

## **Mile Marker:**

Tawna Boyko  
Denton Zube

## **Trail Boss:**

Tim & Tammy Bohn  
Heidi Heitkamp & Dwain Lange  
McKenzie County Tourism  
Stephen & Janet Wieser

## **Founding:**

Curtis Alkire  
Bruce & Roberta Bishop  
Kim Callahan  
Dickinson Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Andrew Howick  
Bryan Lange  
The Printers, Inc., John Nelson  
Eric Selle  
Robert Stein  
Freida Tebelius  
Mark Zimmerman



# Fall Recreation on the Little Missouri National Grassland

by Rob Schilling, Recreation Manager, U. S. Forest Service, Dakota Prairie Grasslands

As fall approaches I cannot help but take time to reflect on all the accomplishments of the volunteers, partners, and recreation and trails staff who contributed to the success of the 2017 summer season. Together we had a very busy summer managing developed and dispersed recreation throughout the Little Missouri National Grassland. Volunteers, in collaboration with the Forest Service, completed operations and maintenance on ten campgrounds located throughout the grassland.

Seven of these campgrounds, CCC, Bennett, Magpie, Elkhorn, Wannagan, Coal Creek, and Burning Coal Vein are strategically located adjacent to the Maah Daah Hey Trail and offer amenities including: potable water, vault toilet's, picnic tables, fire rings, and level camping pads. These campgrounds are designed to provide trail users comfort and support as they travel the Maah Daah Hey and adjacent trails. Campground use has steadily increased over the past few seasons by all user groups; many have provided recommendations to the Forest Service for improvement opportunities within our developed campgrounds and adjacent trailheads.

The CCC campground has been the beneficiary of such a recommendation. Campground users identified multiple opportunities to limit user conflicts within the campground including: separating user groups within the campground boundary, installation of updated, user friendly, equestrian facilities, and a redesign of the CCC trailhead parking area to better accommodate larger vehicles and vehicles towing trailers. The Forest Service supports these recommendations, and has held an initial planning meeting with the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association and Back Country Horseman to organize, plan, and coordinate project design and implementation. I am confident that through volunteer support and partnerships we can begin implementing the recommendations in 2018.

In addition to other campgrounds, the Buffalo Gap campground west of Medora, ND received multiple improvements in 2017. Buffalo Gap campground is a popular overnight stop for locals and visitors enjoying Medora, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, and the Buffalo Gap Trail. This campground is popular with RV owners and offers guests additional amenities

including; paved access roads and parking pads, running water, and comfort stations with showers and flush toilets. Unfortunately, a lighting strike damaged the fresh water system in 2012, making it unusable from 2012-2016. During the fall of 2016 and spring of 2017, Forest Service staff and volunteers made the final repair's to the campground water system. I am pleased to announce that the water faucets, shower houses, and comfort stations have been repaired and are working thanks to the dedicated efforts of our volunteers! Forest Service staff and volunteers also trimmed trees, painted comfort stations, updated kiosk signs, sprayed weeds, and installed a new trailhead sign at the campground.

As we look ahead to 2018, we are preparing to execute the National Visit Use Monitoring Survey (NVUM). The NVUM program has two concurrent goals. First, to produce estimates of the volume of recreation visitation to our National Forest and Grasslands. Second, to produce descriptive information about recreational use, including activity, demographics, visit duration, and visitor satisfaction. We are excited to complete this survey and utilize the data to better position ourselves to provide residents and visitors of North Dakota the recreation opportunities they desire.

In 2018, the Dakota Prairie Grasslands is also proposing recreation fee changes to better align user fees with the benefits and services provided to visitors. Recreation fee revenues provide a valuable source of funds that help the Agency maintain high quality recreation sites and opportunities for which the Dakota Prairie Grasslands is known. Every year, recreation fees allow us to complete additional projects that we would otherwise be unable to fund, including projects like the Buffalo Gap water system repair and the CCC campground redesign. We will continue to leverage recreation fee revenue funds to complete deferred maintenance backlogs, and update recreation infrastructure in 2018.

In conclusion, I want to say, "Thank you" to all the volunteers and partners who contributed to the success of 2017. I look forward to collaborating with the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association on future recreation and trails projects in 2018.

# Call for Volunteers—Burning Coal Vein puncheon—October 11



If you are interested in learning and participating in the design and construction of a puncheon, Wednesday, October 11 is the day you should reserve to help with this project. Near the beginning of the Maah Daah Hey Trail at the entrance to the Burning

Coal Vein Campground a puncheon is needed to cross a low-lying area. Participants will need to meet at the Burning Coal Vein Campground at 9am mountain time. As always the weather may delay this project so be sure to register with Roger to be kept updated. A maximum of eight (8) people can participate. Contact Roger Ashley at 701-300-3315 or email [rogerashley@ndsuper.net](mailto:rogerashley@ndsuper.net) by October 7. Lunch will be provided.

## Rewards for MDHT Users

by Bruce Bishop

In an effort to encourage people (hikers, bikers, and horseback riders) to enjoy the Maah Daah Hey Trail in 2018, the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association has created the Maah Daah Hey Trail Challenge. In addition to the shear enjoyment and health benefits of experiencing the North Dakota Badlands, MDHT users who complete minimum trail mileages during the year will receive a special patch.

To be eligible for the patch, the trail user will need to hike, bike or ride their horse to accumulate 25, 50, 75 or 100 miles on the MDH trail during calendar year 2018. The mileage goal can be covered on any portion of the trail and the user may include any section of the trail more than once. The user will then need to record their usage on the form you will find on the MDHTA Facebook page and the MDHTA website.

The Maah Daah Hey Trail is a 144 mile National Recreational Trail through the western North Dakota Badlands. It a non-motorized multi-use trail with Mile

Post 0 found at the Burning Coal Vein Campground just north of Amidon and Mile Post 144 at the CCC Campground just south of the North Unit of the Theodore Roosevelt Park on the north end. The Trail travels through National Grasslands, the North and South Units of Theodore Roosevelt National Park, Sully Creek State

Park, North Dakota State Lands as well as privately owned lands and generally follows the Little Missouri River.



## Benches

by Bruce Bishop

The Maah Daah Hey Trail Association has received approval from the Dakota Prairie Grasslands to place benches at the trailheads along the Maah Daah Hey Trail. The Association has secured approval to place two more benches along the trail. One bench will be located at the midpoint of the



trail, a second will be located above the switch backs above Wannagan Campground. We're awaiting approval for a third to be located between the Bully Pulpit Trailhead and Sully Creek State Park. The benches will be placed as funds become available to purchase the benches. Our thanks to Greg Morel from the Forest Service for helping with securing the approvals and with helping find the locations for placing the benches. We hope to install the benches in October.

# Feedback from Trail Users

The Maah Daah Hey Trail Association receives feedback from trail users every year. Some of it good, some of it not so good but this is the way life is. The not so good we work on so that future users will have positive experiences. The positive feedback is always uplifting and is always shared with MDHTA directors – This is part of the reason we do what we do! The directors are volunteers like many who support efforts to promote and maintain the trail. MDHTA recognizes that many hands are required to make the Maah Daah Hey Trail System what it is today – Federal dollars just don't go far enough. When trail users write thanking us for our efforts we recognize that really these folks are thanking all who have helped. These groups include US Forest Service, Boy Scouts of America, Dakota Boys and Girls Ranch, Back Country Horsemen of North Dakota, Save the MDH, Student Conservation Association, and Montana Conservation Corps. MDHTA Directors would like to share some of the positive feedback the Association has received from users. We hope you find these as rewarding as we do

*I just completed the Maah Daah Hey Trail from the CCC Camp to Sully State Park starting on 09/01/2017 and completing it on 09/05/2017. It took me five days of hiking for the hundred or so miles. I was very impressed with the condition and up keep of the trail! The water caches were a life saver and I much appreciated knowing they were there to store my water. Several amazing views. The Devils Crossing will forever be remembered. Even more memorable was the bugling elk during my last night of camping. Could not see them in the dark but was awesome to listen to. Lo and behold while eating breakfast next to my tent in the morning I looked up to see not only one but two magnificent bull elk watching me. They stuck around for a good 5 to 10 breath taking minutes! Made the whole hike worth the time and effort.*

*Thank you again for the wonderfully maintained trail. Sincerely, Ryan Rufsvold. Jamestown North Dakota.*

*Love the trails, we mostly backpack on them, been a great experience exploring the area. Look forward of miles to come. Thanks! Bryan Lange new 2017 Founding member*

*I forgot to mention that the gate plaque looks great! We saw it on our August ride on the MDH. Thanks so much for your help with this, we really appreciate it. Christa Kron -- New 2017 life member*

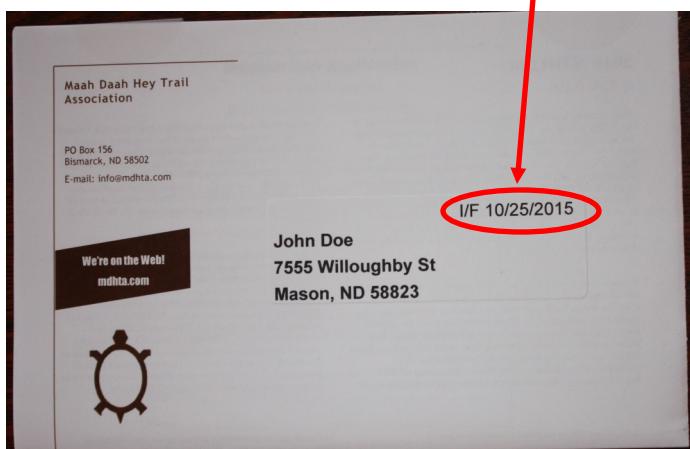
*I ordered a sign in hopes to give it to my mom right before my wedding. We get together ever year to ride the Maah Daah Hey Trail on horse back for the last 15 years. We love that trail and it is our favorite family tradition! I would love it if I could give that wooden sign to my mom on Christmas.  
Thank you, Megan Hiatt PS: She did get the sign for Christmas.*

*I just wanted to follow up on this email and let you know that we decided to do the Bennett Trailhead loop for a 15 mile run. We went opposite directions and met in the middle and it worked out nicely, thank you very much for the detailed suggestion! The area was beautiful and much more than we expected for running in North Dakota. My only complaint was the incredible amount of ticks! We probably picked over 150 ticks in all off of ourselves and dog by the time the run was over. I was wondering if this is typical for the area for this time of year? If so, we might think twice and leave the dog at home next time. Thanks again! -*



# Membership Renewal – It May be Time!

“When do I renew my membership?” All memberships are one year in length except the three year Individual/Family Memberships and Life Memberships. To determine when your membership is up for renewal check the upper right corner of the mailing label on your newsletter.



Your current membership level (I/F = Individual or Family; F = Founding; T = Trail Boss; M = Mile Marker; G = Gatekeeper; and Life) as well as your membership expiration date is given. If your membership has expired please complete the membership application form found in this newsletter or go to [mdhta.com/membership](http://mdhta.com/membership) to complete the requested information. Include a check made out to MDHTA or if you wish to use a credit card go to [mdhta.com/membership](http://mdhta.com/membership).

## Moving? Changing your Email address?

Don't forget to contact us with your new postal address or email address. Stay connected.

## Thanks to all those that have renewed to date!

## Membership Application

Yes! I want to join the Maah Daah Hey Trail Association

- \$25 Individual/Family Member - turtle pin
- \$70 Individual/Family Member for 3 years - turtle pin
- \$75 Founding Member    Cap or  T-shirt S M L XL
- \$200 Trail Boss Member - Denim shirt S M L XL

- \$500 Post Marker Member - wood sign on post or for home
- \$1000 Life Member - turtle sign & name on kiosk

*Make checks payable to: MDHTA, P. O., Box 156, Bismarck, ND 58502*

PLEASE PRINT

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Email newsletter: Yes  No

## **Maah Daah Hey Trail Association**

PO Box 156  
Bismarck, ND 58502  
E-mail: hello@mdhta.com

**We're on the Web!**  
**mdhta.com**



### **MAAH DAAH HEY TRAIL ASSOCIATION Officers and Board of Directors**

President—Curt Glasoe

Vice President—Roger Ashley

Second Vice President—Nick Ybarra

Secretary—Bruce Bishop

Treasurer—Rodney Mitzel

The Maah Daah Hey Trail Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing and maintaining a linear, non-motorized, sustainable, recreational trail system in southwest North Dakota, through voluntary and public involvement, and in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service.

### Dates to Remember

September 30, 2017      Public Lands Day

October 11, 2017      Burning Coal Vein puncheon work—  
see story on p. 5

June 2, 2018      National Trails Day

Find us on 